Genji the Death's Friend

~Chapter Thirty-Nine~ The Kaleidoscope Pismire ⑩

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WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
HUH?
I'D LIKE TO PICK YOUR BRAIN REGARDING THE RECENT INCIDENTS.
I STILL DON'T SEE WHERE YOU'RE GOING WITH THIS, REIZEN-SAN.
I DON'T INTEND TO DIVULGE THE TRUTH TO ANYONE.
IT'S ALL RIGHT, CHIAKI-KUN.
. SO THAT WE MIGHT SHED SOME LIGHT ON THE MYSTERY SURROUNDING "GENJI," RATHER, HIKARU KAGARI.
ALL I SEEK...
...ARE ANSWERS.

Oh, thanks
...
swoo
THAT WOULDN'T BE VERY GOOD FOR YOU OR YOUR "SUPERIORS," WOULD IT?
AND IF I DON'T FIND THEM, THEN I SHALL DIG EVEN FURTHER.
FOR STARTERS, MOST OF THE INCIDENTS HIKARU KAGARI WAS INVOLVED WITH ENDED IN ACCIDENTS OR SUICIDE.
I STILL DON'T FOLLOW.
ASSUMING HE ISN'T CAPABLE OF MIND CONTROL, HE CAN HARDLY BE ACCUSED OF MURDER, RIGHT?
PERHAPS THE NIGHTMARE BEGAN WITH THE MURDER OF YUNA MINATO.
INDEED.

WELL, SURE. HE WAS NO DOUBT SHOCKED THAT HIS FRIEND WAS KILLED.
THAT WOULD BE TRAUMATIC FOR ANY KID.
TAP
IS THAT TRULY ALL?
MEANING?
AT THE TIME, THERE WERE REPORTS OF A PREDATOR LURKING AROUND THE AREA YUNA WAS MURDERED. BECAUSE OF THAT, THE INVESTIGATION WAS PIVOTED IN THAT DIRECTION AND UNFORTUNATELY THE POLICE HIT A WALL.
THE CULPRIT HAS NEVER BEEN FOUND.
THAT DAY, A DIFFERENT SORT OF SUSPECT WAS CAUGHT IN THE DRAGNET, NO?

...THEY WENT IGNORED BY POLICE.
HOWEVER...
WITHOUT SO MUCH AS BEING PROPERLY INVESTIGATED...
FLAP
BECAUSE THEY DIED SHORTLY AFTER THE INCIDENT. NO MYSTERY THERE.
OH...?
THAT'S NOT WHAT I THINK.
THIS PERSON IS CLEARLY LINKED TO THIS INCIDENT AS WELL AS THE KAGARIS' MURDER.
THEY ARE THE ONE WHO KILLED YUNA MINATO.

I CAN ONLY ASSUME IT WAS IMPULSIVE
THINGS DON'T ADD UP, OTHERWISE
IT JUST SO HAPPENED...
THE BOX CUTTER WAS BOUGHT THAT DAY FOR GENJI TO USE ON A SCHOOL PROJECT.
FOR SENPAI...

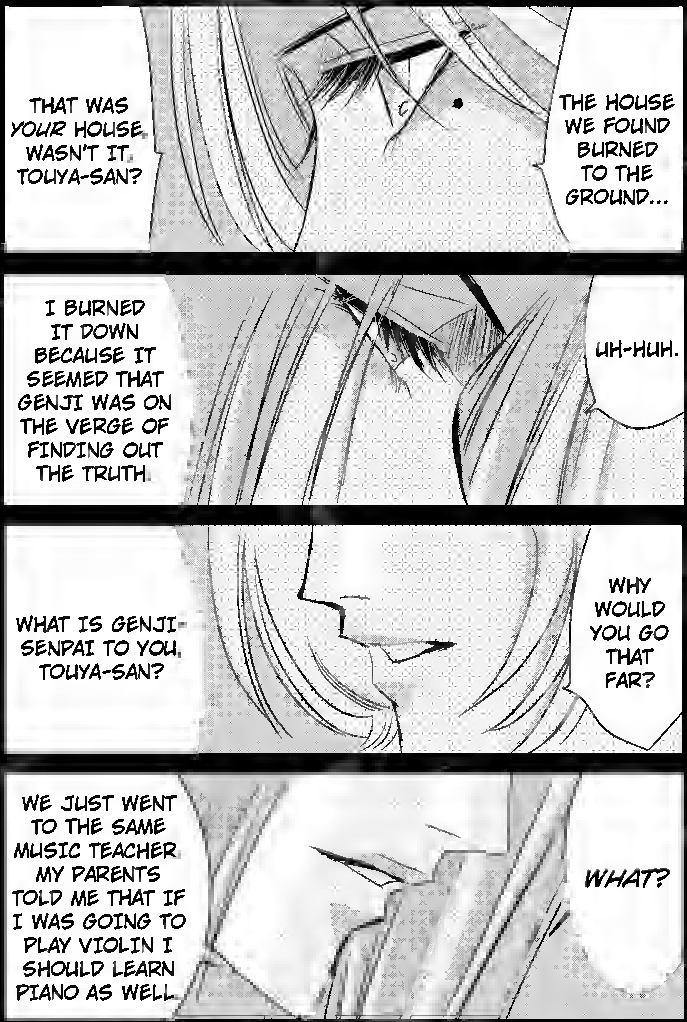
THAT'S RIGHT.
HE TOLD ME SO HIMSELF.
BECAUSE HE WASN'T GOOD AT PIANO. BECAUSE YUNA STARTED AFTER HIM, YET GOT BETTER SO QUICKLY...
HE BLAMED HIMSELF FOR WHAT HAPPENED.
THEN THE ONE WHO KILLED YUNA MINATO WAS...
GENJI'S MOTHER.

SO GENJI-SENPAI SAW HIS OWN MOTHER...
...MURDER HIS FRIEND?
YES. THROUGH A GAP IN THE HEDGES.
IT'S LIKELY THAT LISTENING TO YUNA'S MOTHER BOAST ABOUT HER GIFTED DAUGHTER HURT GENJI'S MOTHER'S PRIDE OVER TIME.
BUT THAT DOESN'T EXPLAIN WHAT BROUGHT HER TO MURDER YUNA.
IT'S JUST THAT...
JUST WHAT ...?
THAT DAY, THERE WAS A PATCH OF FRESHLY LAID ASPHALT IN FRONT OF MY HOUSE.
IF I HAD TO WAGER A GUESS, I'D SAY THE OBNOXIOUS SMELL OF IT COOKING IN THE SETTING SUN MADE HER HEAD HAZY.

A SPARK IS ALL IT TAKES TO IGNITE MAN'S MALICE.
COULD THAT REALLY HAVE BEEN ENOUGH TO...
THE SMELL OF ASPHALT?
...
UNCOMFORTABLE HUMIDITY, THE IRRITATING NOISE OF CONSTRUCTION...
THERE ARE NUMEROUS POSSIBLE AGGRESSORS.
IT'S POSSIBLE THAT YUNA'S BAD MOOD AFTER HER FIGHT WITH GENJI WAS WORSENED BY THE SMELL AS WELL.
THAT HE HAD NO TALENT AS A PIANIST AND SHOULD QUIT FOR HIS OWN GOOD. THINGS LIKE THAT.
WHEN SHE RAN INTO GENJI'S MOTHER, SHE MAY HAVE TALKED BAD ABOUT HIM TO HER FACE.

HOW COULD SHE SAY THAT TO HIS MOM'S FACE?
YUNA MINATO WAS THAT KIND OF GIRL.
SHE WAS SMART, PRETTY AND A GIFTED MUSICIAN, BUT FAR FROM PERFECT. SHE WAS AN INSENSITIVE GIRL, PRONE TO HURTING OTHERS.
...
BUT GENJI STILL LIKED HER.
AFTER THEIR FIGHT HE WANTED TO CATCH HER ON HER WAY HOME FROM CRAM SCHOOL IN ORDER TO APOLOGIZE.
YUNA ALWAYS PASSED BY MY HOUSE TO GET HOME, SO WE PLAYED IN MY YARD WHILE HE WAITED FOR HER.
I'M SORRY, YUNA.
I DIDN'T MEAN TO MAKE YOU CRY.
I SHOULDN'T HAVE SAID THAT...

I DIDN'T MEAN TO SAY...
...YOU SHOULD BE KILLED.


THE HOUSE WE FOUND BURNED TO THE GROUND...
THAT WAS *YOUR* HOUSE, WASN'T IT, TOUYA-SAN?
UH-HUH.
I BURNED IT DOWN BECAUSE IT SEEMED THAT GENJI WAS ON THE VERGE OF FINDING OUT THE TRUTH.
WHY WOULD YOU GO THAT FAR?
WHAT IS GENJI-SENPAI TO YOU, TOUYA-SAN?
WHAT?
WE JUST WENT TO THE SAME MUSIC TEACHER. MY PARENTS TOLD ME THAT IF I WAS GOING TO PLAY VIOLIN I SHOULD LEARN PIANO AS WELL.

THAT'S ALL?
ISN'T THAT ENOUGH?
"I DID SO BECAUSE I WANTED TO."
"THE ASPHALT SMELLED BAD SO SHE KILLED A CHILD."
BECAUSE OF THAT, WITH RIN, BARA AND EVEN MARIA...
YOU SHOWED UP TIME AND TIME AGAIN TO HELP SENPAI?
IT DOESN'T CHANGE THE STORY.

WHY DID SENPAI LOSE HIS MEMORY?

ABOUT WHAT HIS MOTHER DID...

ABOUT YOU...

FROM THOSE WHO SOUGHT TO STEAL IT FROM HIM.
AT THE TIME, GENJI'S FATHER WAS PUSHED TO PROTECT HIS RESEARCH...
OF COURSE, JUST WISHING WASN'T ENOUGH TO MAKE THAT HAPPEN.
THE BIGGEST REASON IS THAT GENJI HIMSELF WANTED TO FORGET.

HIS...
...RE-SEARCH?
YES. THAT, COMBINED WITH HIS WIFE'S CRIME AND HIS SON'S TRAUMA FROM HAVING SEEN IT FIRST HAND...
GENJI'S FATHER, PROFESSOR KAGARI, FORMED A PLOT TO BURY EVERYTHING AND SWIFTLY MOVED TO CARRY IT OUT.
THAT PLOT ALSO CAUSED ME TO LIVE WITH A RIFT IN MY MEMORY.